

F A C T S

RELATING TO THE

S U G A R T R A D E,

With a Refutation of the Assertions made in a Paper called "*Reasons against the Application for lowering the Duties on Foreign Prize Sugar.*"

THE Sugar-Refiners of London finding that the great Question now depending before PARLIAMENT involves in it many Considerations, besides those which are stated in their Petition, and which they are thereby precluded from offering evidence upon before the Committee of the House of Commons, humbly offer the following STATE OF FACTS to the Inspection of the Members of both HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

First, That the Investiture and Blockade of the Enemies Islands, during some Months past, by Sir GEORGE RODNEY'S Fleet, has prevented them from sending Home a very large Part of their Crop of Sugar.

Secondly, That in Consequence of the Dutch War, whereby the French Planter is deprived of the usual Means of sending Home his Produce under Shelter of that Flag, and also from the Capture of St. Eustatius and the Dutch Sugar Colonies of Demarary and Equibo, Sugar is become excessively dear in most Parts of Europe, particularly in France and Holland, and that from hence has arisen a Demand for *incredible Quantities* of Refined Sugars from this Market for Exportation, at a Rate much above the present high Price.

Thirdly, That the Home Trade and the Consumption of this Country, already materially lessened, will receive a deep Injury from so great an Export.

Fourthly, That as several Months must elapse before the late new Sugar Duty can be laid on Ireland, there is much Reason to apprehend, that a considerable Quantity of Sugar of the next Fleets will be consigned thither in Preference to the Ports of Britain, to avoid the Payment of the high Duty to which it is liable here; which of Course will still further increase the Scarcity and Distress of this Market.

The Sugar deficient of the Quantity, to which the Import had arisen in the Years preceding the present Hostilities, is no less than 534,618 Hundred Weight per Annum, as appears on a Comparison of the Quantity imported in 1775 with that received in 1778.—The Loss to the Revenue and the Public, consequent thereon, is beyond the Reach of computation.

State of the Sugar Trade from the Custom-House Report.

Import of Raw Sugar from the British Plantations into England.	Export of Raw Sugar from England.	Export of Refined Sugar from England.	Prize Sugars taken since the War commenced.
1774—1,962,194 Cwt.	1774—184,780 Cwt.	1774—33,152 Cwt.	1778— 33,012
1775—1,938,990	1775—298,292	1775—78,878	1779—312,156
1776—1,668,777	1776—190,637	1776—71,643	1780—115,440
1777—1,335,265	1777—128,168	1777—66,727	—
1778—1,404,372	1778— 80,232	1778—67,014	Total 757,608
1779—1,441,282	1779— 62,945	1779—24,956	—
1780—1,318,512	1780— 96,717	1780—	—

N. B. The Import of 1776 would have exceeded the two former Years, if it had arrived safe.

It is Matter well deserving the Attention of Parliament, that the Public have paid a larger Sum for the small Quantity now imported, than for the ample and overflowing Import which it formerly received. This is a certain Fact, and is capable of Demonstration, viz.

The Import of 1774 being, as the Custom-House Papers prove, 1,962,194 Hundred Weight, was sold for a Price not exceeding on the Average 34s. per-Cwt. amounts to £3,335,729 16 0

The Import of 1779 being only 1,441,282 Hundred Weight, was sold for a Price not less than 57s. per Cwt. on the Average, which amounts to 4,107,653 14 0

Surplus paid for the short Import £771,923 18 0

From hence it will appear that the Public now annually pay the West-India Planter a Sum immensely greater for this narrow and insufficient Import, than they did for the whole Import of the Year 1774, which was the largest ever known, and which not only gave full Employment to the Manufactory and Home Trade, but afforded a Surplus which was sent from hence to foreign Parts, and rendered back to the Kingdom a very capital Sum. It must not be overlooked, that for the importing the present reduced Quantity, *less Shipping*, to the Extent of 40,000 Tons, or one Hundred Sail, are necessary; that the Freight, Insurance, Duty, and all other Charges are saved to the Planter; that the Price of Rum, Cotton, and other Articles, are advanced in Proportion. Further, the Proprietors of Grenada, St. Vincents, and Dominica, receive the Value of their Produce, although it is carried to foreign Markets.

From these Premises there will arise strong Reason to believe that, notwithstanding the Complaints of high Price of Lumber, Freight, Insurance, &c. &c. the West-India Planter has been much overpaid by the enormous Price of Sugar and other Articles of his Produce—and whilst the HOME SUGAR TRADE, the Refinery, the Revenue, and the Public are all suffering Injury from a Want of Sugar, the Parties applying for a Prize Sugar Bill trust that it will not be thought necessary to continue to force out of the Kingdom this valuable Article, which is so much wanted at Home; or to render back a *raw Commodity* to the Ports of the Enemy from whom it was taken, and thereby support their Manufactories, at the very Time in which they are offering Contracts here for unlimited Quantities of *manufactured Sugar*, at Prices hitherto without Precedent.

For the upholding a Practice so inimical to the Welfare of the Community, unfounded Assertions have been offered for Facts, and Declamation has supplied the Deficiency of Arguments.

In a Paper entitled, “*Reasons against the Application for lowering the Duties on foreign Prize-Sugar*,” it is pretended that the Trade of the West-Indies is confined “*for all substantial Purposes to the British Dominions*.” Is it forgot that the Planter may send his Produce to any Part of the World South of Cape Finisterre, without bringing it here, and that, touching at the Ports of Britain, he may carry it free of Duty to any Part of Europe.

The System, under which it is contended, that a Monopoly of the Supply of this Country was granted, has been varied in several Instances.† In Fact, it has continually varied as the PUBLIC GOOD, which ought to be the Basis of all Systems, has from Time to Time required; and perhaps a better Authority will decide, that a Measure, which would at once promote the Sugar Trade of Great-Britain, and check that of her Enemies, tends to the *perfecting* of the System, and not to its Destruction or Injury.

* In those Years the Surplus of the Home Consumption gave an annual Return to the Nation of above Half a Million Sterling.

† By several Acts to open the Trade between the West-Indies and the North-American Provinces; by Acts to admit Prize Cotton and Turkey Cotton for British Use; and by the Privilege allowed to Ireland, by Act of 18 of his present Majesty, to use Prize Sugar.



It is assumed that "*every Argument that applies in Favor of the present Position, would equally apply for admitting Sugars of Foreign Growth, at a moderate Duty, either in Time of War or Peace.*" Can it be necessary to answer such an Argument?

The Precariousness of the Supply which would be caused by the Admission of Prize Sugars, far from proving a *Stimulus* to Speculation, as is alleged, would be the most effectual Prevention of it: and hence arises the Aversion and Opposition to it! For those very opulent Merchants, who have withheld their Sugars from the Public during many Months in the present Year, have so done on the Faith of that "*fair and just Judgment*" which could only be founded on the Certainty of an insufficient Supply, which, very unfortunately for the Public, has laid the Sugar Buyers entirely at their Mercy, putting the Market within the desired "*Reach of Regulation.*"

The Import of Sugar to the Port of London alone, has incontestibly fallen off *above an Hundred Hogsheds per Diem* for the last Four Years: The Scarcity has been felt to the heavy Expence of the Public, and almost to the Ruin of the Refinery; there is not a single Reason to expect that it will be larger the ensuing Year, than it was the past; yet it is said, "*that there is no Foundation for apprehending a Scarcity of Sugar for our own Consumption.*" To prove this, it is shewn that a Quantity equal to about Ten Days Consumption, remains in the Warehouses;* that 50 Ships are coming from Jamaica, and that other Fleets are expected to arrive at some future Period; but as this proves no more, than that the Sugars from our remaining Islands will come here, at some Time or other, if they are not taken at Sea, some further Security was necessary to be held out, and the House of Commons is gravely told of the Acquisition of *Demerary* and *Issequibo*, although it is universally known that Sugars of the Growth of British Settlements on the Continent of America, are by Statute prevented from being sold for Home Consumption.

When the French Sugar Islands were possessed by this Crown, during the last War, the Sugars were imported here and sold for Home Consumption; and also refined for the Use of France and other Nations (then made tributary to Great-Britain, by Means of this invaluable Article) no Difference of Quality was *then* complained of, but they were received under the *same* Duties, and exported under the *same* Drawbacks as the Sugars of the old Plantations; the White Sugars of Grenada *were*, and the Fine Clayed Sugars of Barbadoes, &c. *now are* received under a Duty no heavier than that which is paid on the brownest and worst Muscovado.† Yet this Difference of Quality is, for a very obvious Purpose, *now much insisted on*; and a Charge very decently insinuated of a Design in the Refiners to defraud the Revenue, by working such Sugars for the Drawback.

How far the other Averments contained in that Paper are governed by that Exactness and Candor, which, always incumbent on Men, ought to be most strictly adhered to in solemn Appeals to the Legislature, will be decided on by the highest Judgment. A Manufactory the most laborious and inexplicable, is called one of the most simple; and a Sugar-House, with all its Utensils, an Apparatus of inconsiderable Expence!!!‡

The Sugar-Refiners cannot despair of their Cause, if *such* are the Arguments which are to be opposed to the *GREAT AND STRIKING FACTS* which they have brought before PARLIAMENT.

* About 3,000 Hhds. being the whole Quantity remaining in the Warehouses.

† It is utterly improbable that the Bill solicited would restore to the Refinery a Quantity of *Fine Clayed Sugar*, equal to what it has lost of this Kind, by the Capture of Grenada.

‡ It appears that a Petition from the Bristol Refiners on this Business, states the Value of some of their Houses at £10,000 each. The Premises of some of the London Refiners are more considerable. Some of the London Houses burn above 700 Chaldron of Coals per Annum, when they can work full. A large Sugar House in full Work has above Forty Thousand Vessels of Pottery in constant Use;—they cost from Three-pence to Twelve-pence each.



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Humbly submitted to the Consideration of both
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